

## LACDMH Assists Homeless at Central Library

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



Over 300 homeless individuals visit the [Central Library in Downtown Los Angeles](#) every day. In addition to Central Library, there are 72 libraries throughout LA City, one-third of which are heavily used by those who are homeless. Given this large turnout of individuals in need, Library staff requested help from LACDMH. They asked for three things:

1. A one-page succinct resource guide.
2. Training on how to handle persons exhibiting signs and symptoms of a mental illness, and
3. Access to centrally localized services and resources.

Creating a resource guide was simple, and was completed by Luis Orozco, L.C.S.W., Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME) team, under the direction of La Tina Jackson, L.C.S.W., District Chief, LACDMH Emergency Outreach Bureau (EOB).

Mr. Orozco also led the first training for Library staff (and law enforcement), at the Central Library on January 26, 2016. The training was well-received by over 70 participants—standing-room only!

# DMH e\*News

January 28, 2016

Alysa Solomon, Ph.D., EOB, and Ms. Jackson partnered with staff from the Los Angeles Public Library and Library Foundation of Los Angeles to bring specialized staff from multiple agencies together to satisfy the need for access to services.

Ms. Jackson said, "The goal is to create a one-stop-shop that addresses the needs of homeless persons in an easily accessible location. Given that libraries serve as a refuge for so many individuals without an identifiable residence, it made sense to start with one of the oldest (established 1872) and largest libraries in the country."



The first centralized resource event, entitled *Source*, was held in a meeting room at the Central Library on December 22, 2015. Ms. Jackson and Dr. Solomon, along with staff from Downtown Mental Health Center PEI, and SB82--Service Area 4, provided outreach, referrals and resources. Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA) provided same-day transport to emergency shelters, housing vouchers and on-the-spot electronic intake into the Coordinated Entry System (CES). LAHSA and People Assisting The Homeless (PATH) programs also assisted veterans in locating housing and linking to mental health services. LA County Department of Social Services (DPSS) provided on-the-spot applications for Cal Fresh (food stamps) and Covered California.

According to staff, the first live event went especially smoothly considering that most had not worked together prior, both individually and organizationally. Of the forty attendees seeking assistance, the oldest was a 77 year-old male veteran (USMC), the youngest an 8-year old boy accompanied by his mother, father and 11 year-old brother.

# DMH e\*News

January 28, 2016

The second *Source* event was held on January 26, 2016, at the Central Library. Susan Partovi, M.D., LA County Department of Health Services (LACDHS), joined the effort and provided medical assessment, on-the-spot exams, antibiotic distribution and linkage to dental services.



Fifty-eight individuals attended the second event. The high turnout reflects the great need for services to these vulnerable individuals. LACDMH staff took on many roles to meet the high turnout.

The success of these efforts are the result of the collective leadership, a priority to assist displaced, homeless persons and individual worker passion and dedication to helping this population.

In the future, it is hoped that the LA County Department of Public Health Services (LACDPH) will provide an RV with X-ray capability to screen for Tuberculosis and provide linkage to substance use/abuse programs, including detox services.

The Social Security Administration, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and LACDMH provider, Behavioral Health Services, will provide needed resources at future events and provide benefits info, identification and substance use resources/assistance.